

Minutes Of Regular Meeting Of The Belmont City Council Tuesday, May 13, 2003

CALL TO ORDER 7:32 P.M.

ROLL CALL

Councilmembers Present: Metropulos, Bauer, Warden, Wright

Councilmembers Absent: None

Staff Members Present: City Manager Kersnar, Assistant City Manager Rich, City Attorney Savaree, Community Development Director Ewing, City Engineer Jones, City Clerk Cook

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Proclamation Congratulating Gregory Hubbell, Jr., Elk Bugling Champion

Mayor Wright presented seven-year-old Belmont resident Gregory Hubbell, Jr., with a Proclamation congratulating him on winning the Pee Wee Division of the National Elk Bugling Contest held recently in Reno, Nevada. Gregory Hubbell demonstrated his talents while his father, Gregory Hubbell, Sr., explained the various types of elk calls that were being produced.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Wendy Grainger, Miller Avenue, read from a letter written by June Grainger regarding the claim against the City for the recent sewage spill at her home. Wendy Grainger stated that Mrs. June Grainger had been reimbursed for some living expenses, but requested that the City put aside adequate funds for this claim. She further stated that Mrs. Grainger had recently been hospitalized.

Andrew Peters, Manzanita Avenue, commented regarding the Police/City Hall project, and stated he felt that the City was spending \$10 million on a \$5 million problem. He further stated that viable options exist, and that RDA funds were committed to this project which could be used for other purposes.

Jerry Chapman, San Juan Boulevard, stated that he had paid permit fees for his building project. He has since received an invoice from the City for the arborist, and it was his belief that the permit fees should have covered

this invoice. He stated he does not believe the City should be in the third-party collection business.

Paul Wendt, Sixth Avenue, Peninsula Bicycle Coalition Committee, stated that this was Bike to Work Week, and urged people to observe Bike to Work Day on May 16.

Judy Bushnell, daughter of June Grainger, stated that Mrs. Grainger's home was still uninhabitable after six months. She expressed concern about the insurance company and the City.

Mayor Wright clarified that matters brought to the City Council during Public Comment are generally referred to staff for follow up.

COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councilmember Bauer announced that there would be a School Force Fundraiser meeting on May 29 for Save the Music Program. He also announced that Kollage Art School's fundraiser, A Taste of Art, would be held on Saturday evening, May 17.

Councilmember Warden reminded voters about the upcoming election on June 3.

Mayor Wright described the activities during the recent visit from the delegation from Belmont's Sister City of Namur, Belgium, which included a breakfast hosted by the City, a City tour, and a reception at Ralston Hall, hosted by the University.

Mayor Wright also stated that the Farmer's Market would begin again on Sunday, May 18.

Vice-Mayor Metropulos congratulated the finance department for once again earning a Certificate of Achievement for its financial reporting. He also announced the dedication ceremony for the Sisters of Notre Dame Province Center and Residence on Saturday, May 17.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Approval of meeting minutes: Special and Regular Council Meeting of April 8, 2003.

Approval of Warrant List Dated: April 18, 2003, in the total amount of \$327,630.15, April 25, 2003, in the total amount of \$146,937.44, and May 2, 2003, in the total amount of \$1,653,825.53.

Acceptance of Written Communication: 1) Letter dated April 28, 2003, from PacificCorp re Amended Report for 2001.

Motion to approve Claims Management Report.

Motion to waive reading of Ordinances.

Approval of Ordinance 987 amending Section 8.4.6, (Schedule of Parking Requirements - Community Service Uses) of the Belmont Zoning Ordinance Number 360 for Assembly Uses (2nd reading and adoption).

Approval of Resolution 9400 Accepting Work, Approving Contract Change Orders 1 and 2, and Authorization to Issue Notice of Substantial Completion for Sanitary Sewer Rehabilitation, Basins 2 and 3 Cleaning and Inspection, Cal Sierra Construction, Inc., City Contract Number 447.

Approval of Resolution 9401 authorizing issuance of a third Purchase Order to ASAP Software Express, Inc. in the amount of \$22,088.20 for the final installment of the three year Microsoft Enterprise Agreement.

Approval of Resolution 9402 Amending Lease with AT &T Wireless for Communications Site Lease at the Belmont Sports Complex.

Approval of Resolution 9403 Approving a Purchase Order with Hallmark Roofing for the Replacement of the Roof on the Multi-use Room at the Barrett Community Center in an amount not to exceed \$16,000.

Approval of Resolution 9404 Authorizing Investment of City Monies in Local Agency Investment Fund.

Approval of Resolution 9405 authorizing the City Manager to execute a Professional Services Agreement with Geier & Geier Consulting, Inc. to perform an environmental study for the Holy Cross Church Educational Facilities Development at 900 Alameda De Las Pulgas in an amount not to exceed \$25,090.

Action: On motion made by Councilmember Warden, seconded by Councilmember Metropulos, the Consent Agenda was unanimously approved by a show of hands.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Ordinance Amending Ordinance Number 391 – Regulations and Procedures for the Removal of Overhead Utility Facilities and the Installation of Underground Facilities in Underground Utility Districts to Allow Option of Use of Rule 20A Funds for Installation of Up to 100 Feet of Underground Service Laterals and Conversion on Electric Service Panels within established Underground Utility Districts.

Acting City Engineer Phalen stated that when Rule 20A was implemented during the 1960's, funds were restricted to the cost for undergrounding of the utilities only, and adjacent property owners were responsible for the reconnection fees. She further stated that PG&E recently changed the rules to remove this restriction, and this change in our local ordinance will enable these funds to be utilized for the reconnection fees. She clarified that the limits on reconnection were 100 feet and \$1500.

Mayor Wright opened the Public Hearing. No one came to speak.

Action: On a motion by Councilmember Warden, seconded by Councilmember Bauer, the Public Hearing was closed by a unanimous showing of hands.

Action: On a motion by Councilmember Bauer, seconded by Councilmember Warden, an ordinance Amending Ordinance Number 391 – *Regulations and Procedures for the Removal of Overhead Utility Facilities and the Installation of Underground Facilities in Underground Utility Districts* to Allow Option of Use of Rule 20A Funds for Installation of Up to 100 Feet of Underground Service Laterals and Conversion on Electric Service Panels within established Underground Utility Districts was introduced by title by a unanimous showing of hands, and the second reading and adoption was set for May 27, 2003.

OLD BUSINESS

Discussion and Direction Regarding Implementing Striping Changes on Alameda De Las Pulgas North of Ralston Avenue.

Public Works Director Davis stated that at its previous meeting, the Council approved going out to bid for this repaving project of Ralston and Alameda, pending review of the re-striping portion of the project. He described the configuration of the intersection of Ralston and Alameda, and clarified that the proposed plan will prohibit left turns into the southern-most driveway of Safeway from the northbound traffic on Alameda. He further clarified that in 2000, in response to complaints regarding vehicular movement of

northbound Alameda traffic, the Traffic Safety Committee recommended the elimination of the parking spaces adjacent to the plaza at 2040 Ralston Avenue, but City Council never took formal action to do so. He added that the police department has also expressed concerns over the years regarding this section of Alameda.

Public Works Director Davis explained that traffic studies indicate that the wider the traffic lane, the greater the vehicular speed. He clarified that since the proposed re-striping will reduce the size of the lane, speed should be reduced. He also stated that the re-striping would prohibit left turns into the southern driveway of Safeway and from the parking lot of 2040 Ralston. He clarified that in order to acquire property to change the configuration of the intersection, the cost would be approximately \$270,000, would eliminate three mature trees, two of which were protected, and would eliminate nine or ten parking spaces in the Safeway lot.

Judi Allen, Alameda de las Pulgas, stated that cars passing each other on Alameda were the problem, not left turns into Safeway. She also stated that the plaza on Ralston has only 13 spaces and that the Safeway lot is never full. She objected to federal funds being used to eliminate the Safeway driveway problem. She also stated that she thought there was only one eucalyptus tree that would be removed if property were acquired from Safeway.

Andrew Peters, Manzanita Avenue, stated that he does not see the need for the re-striping, and that other traffic issues were more important. He also stated that this might encourage more traffic.

Councilmember Warden clarified that the re-striping was part of a large resurfacing project and would be done regardless of this particular issue. He further clarified that the City was trying to make the intersection better, and that the improvements were not for Safeway.

In response to Council questions, Public Works Director Davis stated that he had not received any other complaints regarding the re-striping, and clarified that notification to neighbors had been made of this project.

Mayor Wright stated that in reviewing the options available, the current proposal made the most sense to him.

Vice-Mayor Metropulos stated that he would never park in those parking places, and that the proposed re-striping would help improve traffic flow.

Councilmember Bauer stated that the Public Works Director is a traffic engineer, and the project was designed to benefit the majority. He also stated this could be re-evaluated and changed at a later date if necessary.

Councilmember Warden stated that he does not support the alternate design, and that he would like to see a proposal for the first Safeway driveway.

Action: On a motion made by Councilmember Bauer, seconded by Metropulos, the re-striping of Alameda de las Pulgas, as originally presented by staff, was approved 3-1 by a show of hands (Warden, no).

Councilmember Warden clarified that his no vote was not reflective of the work of staff, but he was concerned about the loss of parking.

Discussion and Direction on the Removal of the Traffic Calming Devices on Hastings Drive.

Public Works Director Davis stated that a Traffic Calming Program was initiated on Hastings Drive approximately 14 months ago. He clarified that the 12-month trial period for the temporary devices had been extended to allow for additional analysis of modifications made in response to concerns of the residents. He further stated that a recent survey was conducted of the residents, and that of the 150 surveys sent, 91 were returned, which represented a 58 percent response. He clarified that 46 percent responded in favor, 53 percent opposed. He further clarified that since the Traffic Calming Program requires a two-thirds favorable response in order to install permanent devices, it was recommended that the devices be removed. He stated that the residents would be notified of Council's action.

Vice-Mayor Metropulos stated that considering the previous responses to this program, he was surprised that only 58 percent responded.

Councilmember Warden stated that he concluded from these results that it is difficult to make changes in established neighborhoods, and that he has concerns regarding future projects in the City.

Public Works Director Davis stated that he has some recommendations for modifications to the Traffic Calming Program which he will bring to Council at a later date.

Mayor Wright stated that this is a neighborhood issue, not a Council issue.

City Manager Kersnar stated that the residents are likely concluding that it might be their neighbors who are speeding through their own neighborhood, not other people.

Andrew Peters, Manzanita Avenue, questioned the cost of this trial program.

Councilmember Warden clarified that the temporary devices were much less costly, and that is why they were utilized for this process.

Mayor Warden stated that the analysis of the potential resolution of this problem was performed up front, and clarified that this is what led to the Council's approval of the trial period for this project.

Judi Allen, Alameda de las Pulgas, stated that speed bumps should be installed to resolve the speeding problem. She also expressed a concern regarding the money that was spent on this trial program.

Paul Wendt, Sixth Avenue, stated that he was a member of the original Traffic Calming Task Force. He clarified that he did not agree with the specific trial devices for Hastings Drive, and added that he was not surprised by the results, because it is difficult to control speeding on such a steep street. He requested that the Council keep an open mind with regard to other areas in Belmont, and that traffic calming has been effective in other communities.

Action: On a motion made by Councilmember Warden, seconded by Councilmember Bauer, staff was directed to remove the temporary traffic calming devices on Hastings Drive by a unanimous show of hands.

RECESS: 8:55 P.M.

RECONVENE: 9:01 P.M.

Discussion of Existing Traffic Conditions along Ralston Avenue between Christian Drive and US 101.

Public Works Director Davis stated that traffic volume and speed on Ralston has been a concern since the State of California relinquished its jurisdiction of that street to the City. He clarified that in 1974, the voters passed a measure that provided that no widening of Ralston between Maywood and South Road to four or more lanes could occur without a vote of the people.

Public Works Director Davis described the methods used to determine reasonable and prudent speed limits, and stated that jurisdictions are required to undertake a speed study in order to justify posted speed limits. He clarified that studies indicate that speed limits set at the 85th percentile generate the lowest accident rates.

Public Works Director Davis stated that the posted speed limit between Old County Road and Highway 101 is 25 miles per hour, but that the traffic study indicated that 38 miles per hour represented the 85th percentile. He clarified that only six percent of vehicles travel within the posted speed. He further clarified that often it is the deviant driver who is seen, giving the perception that everyone is speeding.

Public Works Director Davis presented detailed analyses regarding traffic volumes stated that the collision rate on Ralston was lower than other cities with similar arterial streets.

Public Works Director Davis presented options for street calming on arterials, which included pros and cons, and costs associated for each. The options reviewed were 1) traffic signals "resting" in red rather than in green, 2) coordinating traffic signals for 40 mph, 3) reducing to one lane in each direction, 4) reduce travel lanes between signalized intersections, and 5) design alternatives for Ralston between Notre Dame and Sixth Avenue. He clarified that the last option could include roundabouts or traffic signals, and that this would be coordinated with the implementation of the University's Master Plan. He added that roundabouts are much more safer and more effective than traffic signals, but that they are more expensive than a signal.

Public Works Director Davis concluded that Ralston Avenue is a major east/west arterial, that it serves residents, businesses, and educational institutions, that the number of speeders is not significantly high, and that the collision rate is lower than other similar types of streets throughout the Bay Area.

In response to a question from Councilmember Warden, Public Works Director Davis stated that no one section of Ralston Avenue has a higher collision rate than the other. He also clarified that his recommendation would be to raise the speed limit from El Camino to Highway 101, which would increase safety on that section of Ralston.

George Kranen, Notre Dame Avenue, stated that the report did not include any information regarding the backup of eastbound and westbound traffic at Old County Road and El Camino, and that the signal timing was better prior

to the grade separation. He also stated that signals at Alameda and Cipriani should be tied together.

Public Works Director Davis clarified that staff was working with CalTrans regarding the Old County and El Camino signals. He also clarified that staff was working on a software problem to take care of the other intersections mentioned.

Vice-Mayor Metropulos stated that there is often a perception that it takes longer to exit onto Ralston from a side street than it really does.

Councilmember Warden stated that when a street is at capacity, even a small increase in volume makes a big difference. He also stated that the General Plan states that there should be no additional signals on Ralston since it is a scenic corridor, and that he would prefer roundabouts.

Councilmember Bauer stated that he was pleased to see the low accident rate, and that the City might not need to do anything on Ralston.

Mayor Wright stated that there is a perception that there is a bigger problem than what really exists, that the best option is the most costly, and that other options generate other problems. He added that turning left onto Ralston from South Road is a problem.

Andrew Peters, Manzanita Avenue, stated that ingress and egress onto Ralston is an art form, and added that signals change driving routes.

City Manager Kersnar stated that staff would continue to look into all options, but that there did not appear to be a need for any major changes.

Council concurred that the data was helpful for future planning, and they thanked staff for such a comprehensive report.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion of Secondary Dwelling Unit Zone Amendment.

Community Development Director Ewing stated that changes to State law affected secondary dwelling units, such as unit size and parking requirements. He clarified that the City of Belmont's ordinance does not comply and needs to be amended. He also stated that new legislation was pending which would affect other local controls, but that this legislation would not be enacted this year. He stated that Council could either wait a

year for the new legislation, or amend the ordinance now to comply with existing law, and adjust later if necessary.

Councilmember Warden stated that parking requirement for these units is problematic, and he would prefer to adjust now based on current law.

Vice-Mayor Metropulos stated that secondary units can help with the housing stock, and also stated that parking and traffic were issues not addressed in the new laws. He also recommended moving forward with an amendment at this time.

Councilmember Bauer stated he would like to explore this issue to make it work for Belmont, and to comply with the law.

Mayor Wright stated that he would like to see more flexibility for housing, but prefers local control.

Adjournment – at this time being 9:45 P.M., the Regular Meeting of the Belmont City Council was adjourned.

Terri Cook
City Clerk

Meeting tape-recorded and videotaped.

Tape No. 553